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MID FLORIDA CARE AND CULTURE

L. K. "Pic" Thompson, Bartow, Florida

Through the Summer, which includes our rainy season, periodic applications of a complete commercial plant food are in order. This should include minor elements and organic material. Since the frequent rains will leach the soluble elements, half pound applications per plant at two week intervals is not too often. Remember that a fast growing plant is seldom a free blooming one, so do not over do the use of nitrates. It is also possible to poison a plant with too much nitrogen leading to a strap leaf condition. Raw poultry fertilizer is especially bad about this and should be used in limited quantities if at all.

In large collections or commercial nurseries, over-all spraying may be necessary to control scales and insects. This writer believes that daily inspection with spot painting or treatment will serve for the average yard collection. This will also prevent the wholesale eradication of beneficial insects, such as lady bugs and mantis, which if left alone will do a fine job of controlling aphis and other harmful pests.

The frequent use of a weak nurtitional spray will result in vigorous plants and larger blooms. Any commercial soluble plant food will serve, using about one half teaspoon per gallon of water. Unless careful precautions are taken, it is best to avoid the commercial citrus sprays, since if not properly neutralized they will burn tender foliage. A little canned milk or kitchen detergent will serve as a sticker and spreader for the spray.

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DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL MEETING IN ORLANDO, JUNE 6&7th